

# **Section E: Evaluate Career Guidance Program Components**



## Evaluation

Evaluation serves the purpose of accountability in career-guidance program planning. Program evaluation must be performed by counselors according to local school needs and should include input from teachers, supervisors, students, and parents. The overall aim of the guidance and counseling program is to serve student needs through a team involving teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and students.

There are four steps to help assess the program:

- Identify guidance activities and results.
- Gather perceptions about the program.
- Identify staff time and activities.
- Identify resources available in the school and community.

### Step 1: Identify Career Guidance Activities and Results

The counselor's first task is to identify by grade level the career guidance activities each advisory team member undertakes. This step can be accomplished by devising a form, distributing it to the staff, and asking them to list guidance activities in which they participate. To help team members complete their lists, the form should include examples in each grade level or subject area of sample guidance activities. Once the forms are completed and collected, assess the number and types of activities and the level of involvement of the team members. Information from these forms reveals what the guidance program is accomplishing and suggests where revisions or new activities may be needed.

The next task is to identify the desired results for each of the activities. Take one activity at a time and ask: Why do we do this? How are students different as a result of these activities? What do students know or what can students do that they could not do before? For example:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Result</i>
Assist students in planning schedules.	Students can select classes consistent with abilities and interests.

If this is the desired result, the next question is, How do we know that all students for whom the activity was conducted met with the desired result? The next task is to identify which students attained which results. Indicate the number and percent of students achieving this result and how it was determined that the result has been achieved. Follow this technique with each activity (or activity grouping), along with the desired result and the impact on students.

For example:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Assist students in planning schedule.	Students can select classes consistent with abilities and interests.	Only 12 percent of students change classes.  Follow-up study of graduates found that 68 percent reported curriculum satisfaction.

Another part of current program assessment is gathering information about the current status of students. The first step is to identify student performance data sources. Possible sources may include standardized and objective-referenced tests, teacher-made tests, attitude surveys, workforce/occupational studies or surveys, special reports and studies, drop-out studies, and documents produced by agencies other than the school district. Possible locations for such data could be the school counselor's office, student services office, school district testing office, principal's office, and outside agencies such as local law enforcement offices, local/state health departments, local offices dealing with family services and youth services, selective service system offices, and local/state vocational rehabilitation offices.

The data should be cataloged according to the desired result for which it was compiled and readied for the summary report. To compile a summary report on guidance activities and results, include the following information:

1. A list of current guidance activities and the advisory team members who carry out these activities.
2. The procedures used to collect and compile the guidance activities list.
3. A list of the students included in the assessment.
4. The data cataloged according to the desired result.
5. All check list, data analysis, summary, and reporting formats and instruments.
6. Procedures used to compile data.
7. Results and conclusions of the assessment.

Yet another method for assessment is the student portfolio. A portfolio is a collection of pieces of evidence that demonstrates each student's skills and abilities. Portfolios help prepare students for the world of work in three ways. First, they give students an opportunity to master important skills. Second, by completing the requirements, students can showcase their best works to potential employers. Third, by taking responsibility for putting together this collection, students plan and document their accomplishments as well as identify areas for further improvement.

Development of the portfolio is usually begun in the middle school years; in high school, the portfolio becomes a working document that highlights the skills each student has mastered to further his or her individual career plan. The completed portfolio contains five sections:

- **Presenting Your Portfolio:** A table of contents and a letter of introduction presenting the student's work to any outside reviewer.
- **Career Development Package:** An application for employment or for college, a letter of recommendation, and a resume, preparing students for job searching, advanced training, or college.
- **Work Samples:** Four examples and descriptions of work demonstrating mastery of important career-technical skills.
- **Writing Sample:** A sample of writing, demonstrating investigative, analytical, and writing abilities.
- **Supervised Practical Experience Evaluation (i.e., co-op, internship, or apprenticeship):** Documentation of a student's practical or work experience, demonstrating *workplace readiness*.

*Workplace readiness skills* can be divided into six areas: (1) Personal Skills; (2) Interpersonal Skills; (3) Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills; (4) Communication Skills; (5) Occupational Safety; and (6) Technology Literacy. The components to be evaluated under each of the areas are as follows:

### **Personal Skills**

*Appearance:* Student is neat, clean, and dressed appropriately for the job or work.

*Attitude:* Student exhibits a positive attitude, self-confidence, self-motivation, and a sense of pride in work assignments.

*Responsibility:* Student is dependable, arrives on time, works diligently on assignments, and accepts responsibility for his or her actions.

*Time Management:* Student manages time and balances priorities in completing assignments.

*Continued Learning:* Student demonstrates an ability to continue learning beyond current needs on his or her own initiative.

*Ethical Behavior:* Student demonstrates honesty, loyalty, and integrity.

### **Interpersonal Skills**

*Cooperation:* Student works cooperatively as a team member in group settings.

*Interactions:* Student interacts well with members of both genders, all ages, cultural backgrounds, and those with special needs.

*Shared Responsibility:* Student coordinates tasks with team members and shares responsibility for group work.

*Leadership:* Student demonstrates leadership skills, when appropriate.

*Conflict Resolution:* Student demonstrates skill at resolving conflicts by negotiating solutions.

### **Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills**

*Creative Thinking:* Student generates new ideas or innovative ways of doing things.

*Critical Problem Solving:* Student identifies problems, evaluates information, and develops reasonable solutions.

*Information Gathering:* Student locates and organizes information from relevant sources.

*Mathematical Reasoning:* Student applies mathematical concepts appropriately to estimate, measure, and calculate.

### **Communication Skills**

*Speaking:* Student speaks clearly, gives directions, and relays information.

*Listening:* Student listens carefully and asks for clarification when necessary.

*Following Directions:* Student follows directions given in a variety of formats (e.g., oral, written).

*Writing:* Student writes clearly and accurately.

*Telephone Skills:* Student answers calls politely and appropriately, records information accurately, and delivers messages in a timely manner.

### **Occupational Safety**

*Application:* Student understands the reasons for and follows specific safety rules and regulations.

*Materials and Equipment:* Student operates equipment safely and handles hazardous materials in compliance with applicable local, state, and other regulations.

### **Technology Literacy**

*Application:* Student understands and uses technology for the field.

The student portfolio is a valuable assessment tool for the counselor and for the student.

## **Step 2: Gather Perceptions About the Program**

Your current guidance plan was developed cooperatively through input from students, school staff, parents, and members of the community to help identify goals, objectives, and activities to address student needs. This phase of the assessment focuses on what individuals from these groups think about the current program activities. The most direct way is to ask group members what they think by using a questionnaire. Questionnaires should be developed with clear instructions for each group; questions should be specific to your program activities. Information from this phase of the assessment can help you gauge how the program is perceived by various groups and help you plan for improvement.

When compiling a summary report on guidance program perceptions, consider reporting the result from each audience separately. That is, report student perceptions separately, report staff perceptions separately, etc.

## **Step 3: Identify Staff Time and Activities**

Your greatest asset to complete this step of the assessment is the accuracy and detail of your activity logs. Activity logs should include the task (orienting new student, meeting with fourth-grade class), how long it took, and who was involved. Choose a format that is simple for you to follow and to fill out for each activity. The chart on the next page is an example of a simple format to follow.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
10/18/95	1-1:30 p.m.	Visit with parent.	Discuss work plans of child.
	1:30-1:45 p.m.	Visit with new student.	Get-acquainted session.
	1:45-2:30 p.m.	Meet with ninth-grade social studies class.	Decision-making exercise.

Review the activities in the log to determine which tasks take the majority of your time. You can formally assess the data by choosing a typical week and reviewing the activities and the purpose of each activity. Categorize the activities and purposes by commonality—individual counseling, parent conferences, test analysis, group counseling, etc.—and determine where you spend most of your time. Are these activities and time spent in line with your objectives and goals for the program? Are there some activities that take more of your time but result in smaller overall impact? After such an assessment, you can establish priorities and schedule activities that will further the goals of your guidance program.

To compile a summary report on staff time and activities, include the following information:

- A list of teachers and staff included in the assessment.
- A list of guidance activities in which teachers and staff participated.
- Purpose of the activities and the target audience for each activity or activity group.
- Dates and times for activities.

#### **Step 4: Identify Resources Available in the School and Community**

The final task in the evaluation is to identify human, financial, and technical resources. An assessment of the advisory team can be obtained by answering the following questions:

- Who has shown an ability to conduct open discussions with students on emotions and feelings?
- Who seems to have unique abilities to develop effective relationships with students?
- Who has shown interest in assisting students in the area of career development?
- Who spends time in the daily curriculum developing communication skills?
- Who is particularly adept at working with parents?

Your staff time and activities report will also help with this part of the assessment, since you have already gathered information on who is participating in which guidance activities.

The community is also a valuable resource. One way to begin an inventory of the community is to make initial contacts by phone and follow up with letters. The letter should describe your

guidance program, explain what the role of community members could be, and ask for their participation in the program. Include forms for community members to fill out and return.

Remember that students, particularly in high school, are also resources. They contribute to the guidance function through work as aides, as student mentors, and as a source for information on work experience and internships. The final report should compile all staff, students, and community members who serve as resources for the counselor.

The place to begin assessing financial resources is the current budget of the guidance program. Even if there is no official budget, some funds are spent for guidance activities, so begin there. Include such items as salaries, supplies (paper, pencils), materials (books, videotapes), standardized tests, and services, such as test scoring. Include all expenses for guidance activities.

Technical resources include standardized tests, questionnaires and interest inventories, and multi-media resources (CDs, tapes, videos, computers, and computer software). Once these resources have been inventoried, they can be cataloged in the way that will be most useful to the advisory team. Include descriptions of the materials—content, grade level, and what career or educational components they address.